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Dedication of New Living Centers, delivered at Family Day on October 3, 1987

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DEDICATION OF NEW LIVING CENTERS - October 3, 1987 (Family Day)

INTRODUCTION

We come to honor four people and to dedicate these new living centers in their names. Three of the four are close friends of mine, the fourth I knew briefly and respected greatly. I have written most of my remarks today for two reasons. First, to keep this ceremony brief, and second, because if I didn't I would become too emotional and therefore sentimental and perhaps even maudlin. I must say to you that my relationships with my three friends have been among the most satisfying and interesting of my professional career and in my personal life with friends. These have not been ordinary relationships. They have been special. I believe that out of such rapport and personal good feeling the Grand Valley community has gained. When policy makers work together in relationships like the ones that have been established here, there is a synergy that works together for the good of all.
Paul Johnson has served on the Board of Control at Grand Valley since 1968. During that time he has provided leadership as chairman of the Board, Chairman of academic committees, and chairman of the Audit, Business and Personnel Committee. His contributions to the improvement of the college are numerous and varied. He has undertaken the responsibility to raise private money to enhance the quality of this public institution. As President of the Grand Valley College Foundation he has led several campaigns to increase the endowment, augment and initiate programs, the most recent an engineering degree, and now he leads us successfully toward a goal of $6,900,000 for the Grand Rapids Center. He is a college President's dream come true.

Paul's level of commitment to Grand Valley is high and intense. It has reached the degree where he, as one trustee, through time, effort, and other generous qualities, has altered the life of our college for the better, and given shape to its future. Paul has helped chart the course for Grand Valley. There have been rough seas and calm waters, but Paul's influence and systematic approach to the solution of problems and the attainment of objectives always keeps us on course. When we turn to him the response is usually "Steady as she goes." So that is the way we go.
Arnold Ott is a pioneer trustee. The only one still serving on the Board of Control at Grand Valley. I cannot think of Grand Valley without thinking of Arnold. He is a person of ebullient good will. It perks and bubbles and permeates. When Arnold is around, there is enthusiasm, initiative, and courage. These characteristics are contagious and fortunately Arnold has devoted more than 27 years to Grand Valley so this place is thoroughly infected with those characteristics. Arnold has served as chairman of the Board, and chairman of other committees as well. He is always ready to forge ahead. No operation that Arnold takes on sits dead in the water, and if people need a push he pushes them in the right direction with courtesy and good humor. He is one of the state's and nation's foremost entreprenuers and that is one of the reasons Grand Valley is known as a forward-looking, risk-taking institution.
ELLA KOEZE WEED

I remember the first time Ella Koeze Weed and I met. I liked her and she liked me. From that time it was as if we had always worked together. It was said of her that she was a woman before her time. She certainly is one of the foremost women in Michigan political history. Because of her statesmanlike work in the Republican Party and the State Constitutional Convention, Governor Romney appointed her to our Board. She too was always ready to build, to support initiatives that would carry this college to new levels of service. She was a risk-taker. Her interests encompassed the whole college, but her favorite banner, always brought out at the appropriate time, was one that reminded both women and men what women can accomplish at an institution like ours. In her, also, the arts had a champion, and when many times during each year, when I deal with issues relating to the arts at Grand Valley, the memory of Ella comes to mind like an impressionist portrait or a favorite melody. Something that recurs and is pleasant and is important.
ICIE MACY HOOBLER

Icie Macy Hoobler was one of our founders. As a Board member I met her only once, two months before I came to Grand Valley. I was impressed by the gentleness of her spirit and the strength of her intellect. She was a person of international importance in her field of food chemistry and nutrition, and therefore, an ideal role model for students and faculty at a new college. Her achievements in research came at a time when women were not expected to reach such heights of success in fields of basic research. She and I communicated during the period of her retirement from our Board. Her interests were always the students. What did they need? How were they doing? Her interest in Grand Valley continued until the time of her death at 91 years of age. In naming this building for her, we call to the attention of students now and in the future that a noted scholar and humanitarian was with us at the beginning, that in her they have a picture of a person they can emulate.
PRAYER

This morning we are thankful for beauty; beauty that we see in the lives of the people we honor today, for that beauty has affected all of us who work and study here, even those who are not aware of it. We are thankful for the beauty of nature that envelops this place, and that lifts our spirits if we will let it. To be surrounded as we are by colorful trees, tucked away along these deep and varied ravines, is nature's treat that for this moment we should consciously accept and enjoy. In this place of beauty we have built a place for students to live. May the environment be helpful to them, and may this project bless us all.